THE RELEVANCE OF THE OXFORD CONFERENCE DOCTRINE OF MAN TO INDUSTRIAL RECONSTRUCTION

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THE RELEVANCE OF THE OXFORD CONFERENCE DOCTRINE OF MAN TO INDUSTRIAL RECONSTRUCTION

By

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B.A., Occidental College, 1939

A THESIS

Submitted in partial fulfilment of requirements for the degree of

BACHELOR OF DIVINITY

in the

CHURCH DIVINITY SCHOOL OF THE PACIFIC

Berkeley, California

April, 1942

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ABBREVIATIONS

CUM ---- The Christian Understanding of Man

KGH ---- The Kingdom of God and History

OCOR --- The Oxford Conference Official Report

PREFACE

PREFACE

The purpose of this thesis is to present a doctrine of Man and of the Kingdom and resulting principles of social action upon the basis of the publications of the Oxford Conference of 1937, and to illustrate these principles negatively by comparison with optimistic Christian Liberalism, Lutheranism and Roman Catholicism, and positively by suggestions for Christian ministers in the field of industrial reconstruction.

The specific values of this thesis are felt to lie in (1) an example of the possibility of a logical relation between the Christian minister's activity and doctrine (something too often neglected), in (2) the synthesis which is made of the significant and authoritative Oxford Conference materials, and in (3) the setting forth of a type of doctrine and consequent action which is both true to the best Christian traditions and supremely vital and necessary today.

I wish to acknowledge the valuable assistance of Dr. Joseph Fletcher, Dr. John C. Bennett, Miss Ilione Baldwin, Miss Nellie Anne Daniels who typed the thesis and particularly my advisor, Dr. Randolph C. Miller, who guided the work at every stage and made many invaluable suggestions.

CHAPTER I

A Doctrine of Man and of the Kingdom Based on the Oxford Conference Publications

CHAPTER I

A Doctrine of Man and of the Kingdom Based on the Oxford Conference Publications

SECTION I. Doctrine of Man

Part 1. Nature of Man

"What is man, that thou art mindful of him? and the Son of man, that thou visitest him?" When the psalmist asked this question he was asking an eternal question. Man has always been a mystery to himself, and most human problems are a result of this mystery. All the centuries of human history bear eloquent witness to this fact. Therefore it is not surprising that the great ecumenical Oxford Conference which attempted to give an answer to some of these problems should devote considerable space in its official report and a whole supplementary book to the development of a Christian doctrine of man. This Oxford doctrine of man, however, is nowhere synthesized. It exists only in individual articles or in stray passages in the official report. Thus, since it is our purpose to base a specific program of ministerial activity upon "the Oxford doctrines of man and of the Kingdom," we must determine the general norm of these doctrines for ourselves. We will have to create them, as it were, by making a synthesis of all relevant Oxford statements and implications.

a. The nature of the original image of God

The nature of the original image of God is of course the first element to be considered in developing a unified Oxford Conference Christian doctrine of man. To begin with, there is some basic general agreement. In the Official Report, the most authoritative Oxford source, it says,

> "Christians share the conviction that there is one living and true God, Creator and Lord of earth and heaven, ...the chief of whose creatures is man, possessed of reason and conscience, and capable of becoming like him in character and sharing eternal life with him in an enduring society of the righteous."[1]

Also, in the supplementary Oxford book, The Christian Understanding of Man, the various essayists who deal with the original image of God agree that God created everything that there is in man. All his natural virtues and capacities were created by the Father of all that is. Thus far there is agreement, but there is a difference in regard to the special and primary nature of this image of God in man. Professor Nicolas Alexeiev takes one extreme; Professor Emil Brunner and Pastor Pierre Maury take the other. Alexeiev speaks of the image of God "in terms of the relation of the Creator to the creature," and then goes on to describe created man "as a reproduction of the original pattern", saying that "If God

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[1] The Oxford Conference, Official Report, ed. by J.H. Oldham (Chicago, 1937), p. 130.

is a'person' in the fullest sense of the word, it follows that man is a kind of 'reduced' person."[2]

Pastor Maury differs considerably with this position when he stresses that the image of God consists in our knowledge of dependence upon God, and not in any divinity of nature which we may possess. He says, "The notion of divine likeness as the Bible enunciates it implies the knowledge of a subordination and never the knowledge of an analogy of nature of which man could take advantage."[3]

Brunner's position is similar to that of Maury. Man is man because God addresses him. This in turn makes man a responsible being, something of which he is always dimly aware. The image of God does not consist, he says, in "a formal similarity between God and man--man as the rational being, the fact that man is a subject or a person."[4]

The position of Professor Walter Marshall Horton stands almost directly between the two extremes given above and might almost be called a norm for the synthesized Oxford position. He says that the Christian doctrine of the image of God includes the scientific Thomistic, Aristotelian view which expresses it as "reason itself, or the power of self-

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[2] The Christian Understanding of Man, Vol. II, The Official Oxford Conference Books (Chicago, 1938), p. 132.

[3] CUM, p. 252.

[4] CUM, pp. 159.

determination through the envisagement of ideal ends."[5] But he goes beyond this and says that the essential nature of the image of God "must be interpreted as man's capacity to respond gratefully to the divine love that patiently seeks him out, and to show his gratitude for God's patient mercy by exhibiting a similar magnanimity to his neighbors, even though they be his enemies."[6] This Christian view of the relation of God and man is confirmed, says Horton, when we observe that man does at times repond to the Gospel with a disinterested devotion far greater than his love for any other earthly thing; and also if he fails to live up to this challenge his conscience will not let him rest, "and he bows down in penitence before the God of love whom he continues to crucify."[7] This is somewhat similar to Brunner's already mentioned description of man's sense of responsibility which he claims exists not only in the Christian but also in a dim way in the natural man -- in both cases, evidence of the image of God.

b. The nature of the Fall

There are two questions we are concerned with in discussing the nature of the "fall": what occurred and how did

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[5] CUM, p. 232.

[6] Loc. cit.

[7] CUM, p. 233.

it occur? In regard to the first of these questions there is almost complete agreement among the three Oxford men who mention the "fall" at all, Brunner, Maury, and Calhoun. They all agree that the "fall" is a real and complete rebellion of man against the God who made him. Professor Calhoun's position is perhaps the most expressive. He describes this rebellion against God as "the disposition of every infant, every adult, every social group ... and every culture to affirm its own wants and will as ultimate. ... Mankind ... is'fallen' not from some original perfection ... but simply into the plight of selfhood responsible yet not truly responsive to God."[8]

The second question of how the fall occured again shows fairly close agreement among these writers. Brunner has the most to say about it, stressing that just as we can not say how and when the creation took place so also we can not say how and when in regard to the fall. There can be no historical account of the fall, he says, and you can not measure the perversion of individuals by what takes place in the realms of time and space.[9] Pastor Maury is a little more biblically literal than this for he speaks of the "aeon between the fall and the resurrection."[10]

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[8] CUM, p. 77.

[9] CUM, p. 163.

[10] CUM, p. 258.

c. The degree in which man is now a slave of sin

If we admit that man has "fallen," there inevitably arises the question, how far and how much? The Oxford Conference Official Report describes it as follows:

> "Christianity ... recognizes that the image of God in man is so defaced by sin that man's native worth and dignity are largely obscured. For this reason it must be emphasized that our obligation to the neighbor springs not so much from our recognition of man's native dignity as from the Christian revelation of God's purpose to restore that dignity through the redemption that is in Christ." 11

And again:

> "Christians know themselves and all men as sinners and members of a race estranged from God ... Man, both individually and collectively, needs redemption."12

And further:

> "The church is supremely concerned with persons, and world problems have their roots ultimately in the hearts of persons who 'must be born again'"13

From these statements it is clear that the Oxford Conference considers man's sin as not a mere parasitic growth upon a basic goodness which is still supreme, but as an extensive and tragic alienation from God which can be overcome only through a new birth in Christ.

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11 OCOR, p. 75.

12 OCOR, p. 130.

13 OCOR, p. 154.

Of the Oxford writers in The Christian Understanding of Man who deal with this question, Brunner comes the closest to the official Oxford position. He speaks first of the"guilt which most profoundly separates us from God;"[14] and which we are utterly unable to deal with or remove. Next he makes clear our bondage to sin, not a deterministic or casual enslavement but a personal and actual one. "The Bible does not know the concept of 'original sin', " he says, "but that of 'death' (thanatos), which as the power of sin enslaves the will."[15] Finally, he points out that our guilt and bondage are proved by our existence under the law. Unredeemed men "know God's will no longer as the will of one who loves and gives, but as that of one who demands, in a legalistic way."[16]

d. The degree in which man still retains the basic imprint of the image of God

The Oxford Official Report does not say a great deal about this point except to speak of the Christian love of neighbor as "an obligation which rests partly upon the native worth and dignity of man as made in the image of God"[17] and of the fact that it is possible "to educate the power of

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14 CUM, p. 164.

15 Loc.Cit.

16 Loc. Cit.

17 OCOR, p. 75.

criticism so that people may discriminate between those elements in the thought and movement of our time which are God's gift and those which are incompatible with the Christian understanding of life."[18] If it is thus possible to educate there must be some worthwhile element in man capable of responding to a Christian appeal, that is, some remaining vestige of the image of God.

But still we have not determined how extensive and how basic is this remaining element of God's image. Among the individual Oxford writers, Calhoun and Farrer stress that sinful and"fallen" man still has a deep sense of responsibility which is mediated to him through the surrounding natural environment. Farrer even goes so far as to say that man has "the power of reflecting on his true nature and obtaining some impression of the pattern of it intended by God."[19] Pastor Maury is considerably more conservative than this for he emphasizes that human religions and moralities are no basis for a natural theology, rather do they show the perversion and sin of man. The most that they can accomplish is to indicate the responsible nature of man, and man can exercise this responsibility only "when the Word of God, which accuses him by giving him grace on Calvary,

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[18] OCOR, p. 130.

[19] CUM, p. 193.

is addressed to him."[20] Perhaps the individual position most representative of Oxford thought is that of Walter Marshall Horton who denies both the Eastern Orthodox doctrine of man's essentially divine nature and the neo-Calvinist view that there is nothing in man to respond to the grace of God, a great gulf existing between Creator and creature.[21] Professor Horton maintains that:

> "in the life and teachings of the Christ himself, divine humanity remains conscious of its clear distinction from God, and its humble dependence upon him, as the source of all being and all goodness. 'There is none good save one, even God.' Yet in his dealing with even the worst of men, Christ constantly made appeal to a hidden goodness in their nature, a capacity of response to God's mercy. ... God has implanted his image in the depths of man's soul, and by his grace, embodied in the Christ, has begun to pierce the thick layers of sinful habit and disposition."[22]

e. The degree of man's responsibility for his acts -- free will

All the Oxford writers in The Christian Understanding of Man agree to the fact of man's free-will. Most of them speak of his responsibility and imply it in that way. Austin Farrer deals with Christian freedom more extensively than

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20 CUM, p. 262.

21 CUM, p. 239.

22 CUM, pp. 239-40.

any of the others and in a fairly representative manner.

He states that there are many schools with different views about the scope of man's freedom, but that it is his purpose to give the minimum doctrine of human liberty. This is, he feels, not "an arbitrary freedom of choice -- that man is able to will anything that could ever come into his head,"[23] but rather a "freedom of effort" to reflect and to recognize his aspirations and also a freedom to make the effort necessary to achieve them.[24]

Brunner speaks of this freedom of the will, this responsibility of man as the distinctive personal quality which distinguishes him from animals. Also he gives it a more distinctly Christian emphasis by saying that "when the Bible speaks of man it always presupposes a human being who is able to assume responsibility for his own life, and is capable of following the message of his Creator with intelligence."[25]

f. The results of man's "fallen" condition

So far, we have attempted to describe the Oxford Conference position in regard to the general nature of "fallen" man, to what extent he is now a slave of sin, and to what

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23 CUM, p. 207.

24 Loc. cit.

25 CUM, p. 172.

extent he still retains the orignal image of God. As a result of this "fallen" nature, man's individual and corporate personality is, of course, permeated with evil. Various passages throughout both the Official Report and The Christian Understanding of Man imply such evil qualities as pride, egoism, selfishness, and an inordinate will to power. The Official Report makes the results of this fallen nature especially vivid in its explanation of the causes of social disintegration today.

It speaks first of the growing irreligious secularism today and its relation to the Renaissance and the Enlightenment. This has been furthered and deepened by the egoistic confidence of natural science "That all human problems were soluble by the constructive intellect and through material means"[26] Also the spiritual capacities of the masses have been exhausted by the necessity for them to bend every effort to maintain existence. And the very fact that the masses have thus had to sell their souls for bread, due primarily to the selfishness of those in power, is only more evidence of the results of man's corruption.[27] The "Report of the Section on Church and Community" summarizes it all very well:

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[26] OCOR, pp. 226-27.

[27] OCOR, p. 227.

> "Today ... as probably only once or twice before in human history, the foundations themselves are shaken. Traditional pieties and loyalties and standards of conduct have lost their unquestioned authority; no new ones have taken their place. As a result, the community life of mankind has been thrown into confusion and disintegration."[28]

Part 2. Salvation of Man

a. The salvation of individual men and women

"'God wills all men to be saved. 'Therefore he has in Christ come to us, and therefore he has established his church among us to proclaim the message of salvation through Christ for all nations."[29] Thus can we well begin this section on what the Oxford Conference has to say about salvation, about saving mankind from the desperate condition into which his "fallen" nature has brought him.

First, it is clear, that the Conference recognized the basic importance of individual salvation. In some sections of the Official Report the call for individual and social salvation is parallel, but in others the redemption of persons is made primary. In the "Additional Report of the Section on Church and State," for example, faith is described as the motive for all Christian political acti-

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[28] OCOR, p. 55.

[29] OCOR, pp. 63-64.

vity. Faith, communion with God, trust in Him are declared to be far more in need of emphasis at the present time than a program of action. There is no lack of programs but rather the motive power to put them into effect. "The more the Christian community receives from God strength, confidence, courage, joy, and liberty, the more will the powers of the eternal world radiate from it into the world."[30]

The steps in individual salvation are of course familiar: repentence, forgiveness, justification, and sanctification. These steps can be found by implication in various sections of the Oxford Official Report as follows:-

Repentence: "Man, both individually and collectively needs redemption. ... God gives himself in his spirit to re-create individuals and communities who turn to him in repentence." 31

Forgiveness: "God ... so loved the world that he gave his only begotten Son for its sin." 32

Justification by faith: The church "must make plain that no education is adequate without the living encounter with God and the response of personal faith." 33

Sanctification: "It is the church's aim to educate free persons under law to Christ. The freedom which she seeks is both

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30 OCOR, pp. 252-53.

31 OCOR, p. 45.

32 OCOR, p. 63.

33 OCOR, p. 148.

> liberty from the deceit of evil passions within the heart, and the strength of character to preserve liberty of conscience under external pressure. It is her conviction that personality attains this freedom and completeness only in obedience to God." 34

b. Social salvation

It is clear that the Oxford Conference holds to more than just individual salvation. All its emphasis on the proper relations and effective service of the church to the state and community implies a belief that Christianity has a wider sphere of action than direct work with individual souls. This wider field of Christian activity is called social salvation.

First of all, what is social salvation according to the Oxford Conference? Nowhere is there a specific definition but by imlication one can be drawn together. Social salvation means, for one thing, that personal faith in God and love of Him must, if they are real, result in good works. Thus the Official Report says, "The chief end of man is to glorify God, to honor and love him, in work and life as in worship. This love involves the obligation to love our neighbors as ourselves." [35] An even more important aspect

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[34] Loc. Cit.

[35] OCOR, p. 75.

of social salvation is the belief that often social evils and obstructions must be reformed and removed before the Gospel can have a chance to work on the hearts of men. The Official Report expresses it in this way:

> "Christianity is emphatically a social religion. Its teaching is directed to men not as units isolated from their fellows but as members of groups and communities. It insists that the only life in which human beings can find peace and happiness is that of service and self-sacrifice. It asserts that the relations of men to one another are part of their relation to God. It emphasizes that, if the former are not what the Christian conscience would approve, then the latter necessarily share their corruption. 'If a man love not his brother whom he hath seen, how shall he love God whom he hath not seen?"[36]

So far we have seen what Oxford says about the nature of social salvation; the conference also has a great deal to say about the need for this social salvation today. It makes clear this need especially well in the section on the "Economic Order" by pointing out that "the moral and spiritual nature of man, according to the Christian understanding of that nature, is affronted by the assumptions and operation ... of the industrialized world in four respects."[37] These are "the enhancement of acquisitiveness" which seriously threatens to debase the human spirit, the "inequalities" which condemn many of the pop-

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[36] OCOR, p. 92.

[37] OCOR, p. 87.

ulation to lives in environmental circumstances uncondu-cive to Christian development, "the irresponsible possession of economic power" which creates in those who hold it an unchristian dictatorial temper and in those who are subject to it servile fear with consequent loss of spiritual virility, and "the frustration of the sense of Christian vocation" which presents the dilemma of either ignoring one's conscience in regard to the profit motive, poor workmanship, and deceptive salesmanship, or else suffering severe material loss."[38]

In order to complete adequately this discussion of social salvation we will have to go beyond a description of its nature and the need for it. We will have to state, at least briefly, the way in which the Oxford Conference implies that we should attempt to put into effect. In the "Report of the Section on Church and State" the present tasks of the church are summarized in six points. In a general way this covers the Oxford conception of the church's contribution to social salvation.

First, the report suggests that the churches should summon their members to repentance, individually and as organized bodies, and to pray for a new spirit of consecration to the furthering of God's purpose in the world. Second, the churches should set up cooperative agencies which can help to discharge effectively various common tasks. Thirdly,

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[38] OCOR, pp. 87-91.

the churches should ask their clerical and lay members to cooperate with the state in all its constructive endeavors. Fourthly, the churches should do all they can to guard the rights of free worship, witness, service, and education both for small groups of Christians and for larger organized bodies. Fifthly, the churches should be concerned with all, "Christians and non-Christians, who are victims of cruelty and oppression, and ... do what they can to secure for them a treatment compatible with the dignity of their human personality as children of God."[39] Lastly, the churches should "renounce publicly and forever the use of all forms of persecution, whether by Christians against other Christians or by Christians against adherents of other religions."[40]

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[39] OCOR, pp. 73-74.

[40] OCOR, p. 74.

SECTION II. Doctrine of the Kingdom

Part 1. General Nature of the Kingdom

a. Concerned with all God's Realm, especially this world

So far, we have dealt with the Christian doctrine of man as expressed in the writings of the Oxford Conference. Now we will take up in a similar fashion the doctrine of the Kingdom, our purpose being to lay a foundation from which we can derive the Oxford principles of Christian social activity and ultimately the concrete program of the individual minister.

The first question which faces us in determining the Oxford conception of the Kingdom is the Kingdom's general nature, more specifically, the realm or area which it covers. In regard to this it must be said first that the whole Oxford emphasis is on the Kingdom of God as primarily concerned with this world. The Official Report says, "This world is God's world. His spirit is alive today as yesterday. Here in his own good time his kingdom will come."[41] In another place the Report implies this earthly nature of the Kingdom in the phrase, "In so far as the kingdom of God is in conflict with the world and is therefore still to come."[42]

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41 OCOR, p. 112.

42 OCOR, p. 76.

The individual Oxford writers in the supplementary Oxford book, The Kingdom of God and History, also bear out this emphasis of the Official Report. Dr. H.D. Wendland says, "God's Kingdom does not exist apart from his people; ... 'God's Kingdom is a Kingdom for the earth ... It is not a metaphysical realm behind or above this world, lying behind the things of this world or hovering over them."[43] While most of the Oxford emphasis on the Kingdom concerns this world there are also statements which imply its relation to heaven, eternity, the rest of God's universe. It is spoken of as something which has come or is coming. If that is so, it must come from somewhere. In other words, before God's Kingdom comes to this world it must be in existence somewhere else. Dr. Edwyn Bevan in The Kingdom of God and History refers to this other worldly aspect of the Kingdom when he says that God's will, its chief characteristic, "is not at present done on earth as it is in heaven."[44]

b. Concerned with God's sovereignty and Kingly Rule

God's sovereignty, Kingly Rule, Divine Will is, in the mind of the conference, the primary quality of His Kingdom. The Official Report says, "The kingdom of God, as proclaimed

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43 The Kingdom of God and History, An Oxford Conference Book (Chicago, 1938), p. 146.

44 KGH, p. 41.

in the gospel, is the reign of God ... In so far as it has come, the will of God as revealed in Christ ... is the ultimate standard of Christian conduct." This same primary quality of the Kingdom is brought out also in the following words: "The church has in mind God's will for her-- a will never fully achieved but to which she must always seek to conform."[46]

c. Concerned with judgment and salvation

Although these qualities are not verbally associated with the term, "Kingdom," in the Official Report, the relation is definitely implied.[47] Dr. C. H. Dodd, however, in The Kingdom of God and History makes this relationship verbal and also very definite:

> "'The hour cometh and now is,' when we behold the Kingdom of God come with power. It comes with judgement upon the evil of the world, and the church always knows that 'it is time for judgment to begin from the House of God.' We stand before the judgment-seat of Christ, and there we know that the judgment of God is also forgiveness, and that through death we rise to life. It is through this process of judgment and redemption, death and resurrection, that history is always re-created from an inner center, that is, out of the experience of those who have 'received the Kingdom of God,' and are thereby committed to the labor

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45 OCOR, p.76.

46 OCOR, p. 114.

47 OCOR, pp. 115, 130-31.

and conflict through which the Kingdom is revealed."[48]

d. Concerned with transcendence and immanence

The Official Report does not say a great deal about the transcendence and immanence of the Kingdom in a specific way, but it does mention them. Immanence is implied when the Report says, the Kingdom "is an established reality in the coming of Christ and in the presence of his spirit in the world;"[49] and also when it quotes Baron von Hugel as saying,"'the supernatural is known in and through the natural."'[50] Similarly, transcendence is asserted when the Report states that "The church should witness ... to the reality of the kingdom of God which transcends the world of nations."[51]

e. Concerned with ethics

If, as was made clear at the first of this section, the primary Oxford emphasis in regard to the Kingdom is earthly and this worldly, it follows that the Conference must be eminently concerned with the relation of the Kingdom of

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48 KGH, p. 37.

49 OCOR, p. 76.

50 OCOR, p. 109.

51 OCOR, p. 167.

God and ethics. An earthly Kingdom (and to some extent a heavenly one too) is of necessity greatly concerned with good fellowship and proper harmony in the associations of men. Such harmony and fellowship is a sign of the true existence of the Kingdom. Thus ethics, which has been defined as "the science of morals"[52] or the principles of right conduct, can be a great help in achieving the quality of relationships which are necessary if there is to be a spread of this much desired reign of God. This help will not be so much in providing a motive for extending the Kingdom, but rather in defining the types of human associations which it must contain.

What is the basis of Christian ethics, both individual and social? What is the dominant underlying quality which must always be present? According to "The Report of the Section on Church, Community and State in Relation to the Economic Order" it is love. Thr commandment of love as revealed in Jesus is the ultimate will of God for men and thus is the final standard of human conduct.[53] But let us break down this commandment of love. What are its component parts for the individual? "The Report of the Section on the Universal Church and the World of Nations" says that the church should

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52 The Pocket Oxford Dictionary, compiled by F.G. Fowler and H.W. Fowler (Oxford, 1925), p. 272.

53 OCOR, p. 76.

call its individual members to repentence for their participation in the evils of "greed, selfishness, distrust, and pride of race and nation" which contribute "to the embittering of relations among nations."[54] On the positive side church members should seek "the fruit of the spirit, 'love, joy, peace, long-suffering, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, meekness, self control.'"[55]

But now another question arises. These individual ethical qualities are well and good. They are proper and necessary. What, however, is their result? In every-day living what will be the Christian action of individuals based upon them? "The Report of the Section on Church and State" says that the duties of the Christian individual in regard to the state are as follows: praying for it, loyalty and obedience to it in so far as this is not directly contrary to God's command, cooperation with and moral support of the state in promoting welfare and upholding justice, criticism of the state when necessary, holding before men in public office those principles which maintain the dignity of man as made in the image of God, and filling public life with the spirit of Christ, training others to do likewise.[56]

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54 OCOR, p. 166.

55 OCOR, Loc. cit.

56 OCOR, pp. 70-71.

Now we come to social ethics or the principles which should prevail in the broader and more corporate relations of men. First, it must be said that all the principles of individual ethics so far stated apply to the larger associations of people also. Especally does the above list of the duties of the individual to the state apply also to the church as a whole and to any other groups within the state. The church particularly, and other groups if they are able, should try to illustrate in their own lives the will of God for the whole of society. Only in so far as they do this will they be in a position to rebuke the state and the world as a whole for social sin.[57] But what are these social sins? What are the great evils of our time which social ethics denounce? Of course a thorough discussion of them would be endless, but the section on the "Economic Order" lists a few which are especially serious and detrimental to the advancement of the Kingdom. They are "the enhancement of acquisitiveness, inequalities, the irresponsible possession of econmic power, and the frustration of the sense of Christian vocation."[58] These are social sins and evils which all the standards of social ethics repudiate and say we must overcome. Further, in regard to the economic order, the Oxford

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[57] OCOR, p. 71.

[58] OCOR, pp. 87-91.

Report claims that our age is unique. Because of scientific techniques we have real possibility for economic plenty. This means that mankind is morally responsible for the existence of poverty today as it never has been before in Christian history. "Christian effort in relation to the economic order should henceforth be turned from charitable paternalism to the realization of more equal justice in the distribution of wealth."[59]

Professor Eugene W. Lyman in The Kingdom of God and History summarizes individual and social ethics in relation to the Kingdom of God very well:

> "The Kingdom of God according to the Christian view of history must be understood as both personal and social in its meaning. It means the personal doing of the will of God from the heart and the blessedness which comes to faith, humility, and the childlike spirit, as Jesus taught. It is, as St. Paul taught, 'righteousness and peace and joy in the Holy Spirit.' At the same time it means the gathering of men into a community whose bond is love. This is an elect community, whose election, however, is not to privilege, but to service. This service must be guided and inspired by Jesus' compassion for the weak, his welcome to the disinherited, his indignation against injustice combined with his summons to humility and to being servants of all, and supremely by his sense of the sovereignty of God's moral will, by his message of forgiveness which renders the repentant heart forgiving, and by his conviction of the boundless possibilities which open before faith in God." 60

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59 OCOR, p. 87.

60 KGH, p. 97.

Part 2. The Entrance of God's Kingdom into History

a. In regard to the Coming of Christ

The Kingdom of God came into history with Christ. "It is an established reality in the coming of Christ and in the presence of his Spirit in the world."[61] So says the Official Report and the individual Oxford writers are in agreement. Dr. Dodd says, "The kingdom of God is not something yet to comce. It came with Jesus Christ, and in its coming was perceived to be eternal in its quality."[62] Dr. Wendland emphasizes that God's Kingdom both has come, is coming, and will come, and in regard to the "has come" means the entrance of Christ into history.

b. In regard to the triumph of Christ making Him the center of history

Dr. Wendland stresses that the coming of Christ into history is also the first coming of the Kingdom. Here we can not separate one aspect of Christ's work from another. It is the totality of His mission which brings the entrance of the Kingdom. But there was something special about the resurrection. Here, according to Dr. Wendland, Christ be-

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61 OCOR, p. 76.

62 KGH, p. 37.

came the "center of history."[63] What he means is that all history took on a new quality and pointed toward a new goal when Christ rose from the dead and so made possible the salvation of all men. From then on things were different. A new hope had been born for mankind. Thus Christ's triumph is in the deepest sense the center of history.

The Official Report implies this same idea, but bases it upon the cross as well as upon the resurrection as follows:

> "There comes a call to the church to face in the light of Christ all the facts that may be gathered from every quarter, and thereafter, in the spirit and through the grace of Christ, to work for the manifestation of the new divine order which appeared in the cross and resurrection of the Son of God." 64

Part 3. The Subsequent Relation of God's Kingdom to History

a. The relation of the Kingdom and history outside of the church

The relation of the Kingdom to history outside of the church or, in other words, to secular history is nowhere verbally dealt with in the Official Report. However, implications in regard to this relationship can be discovered, and they fall into two main classifications.

First, there is an implied relationship between the

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63 KGH, p. 147.

64 OCOR, pp. 154-55.

Kingdom of God and the secular state in the view that the latter is ultimately under the control of and responsible to God. The "Report of the Section on the Universal Church and the World of Nations" puts it this way: "A true conception of international order requires a recognition of the fact that the state, whether it admits it or not, is not autonomous but is under the ultimate government of God."[65]

Secondly, a relationship between the Kingdom of God and secular history is implied in the "Additional Report of the Section on Church and State" which holds that God works through history using it as a preparatory agent in the furthering of His plan for the redemption of the world. This important observation is stated as follows:

> "The state has a divine sanction. Its authority and dignity are based on this fact. But it is not an end in itself nor a final end. It exists to serve the purposes of God. Thus all political action is confronted by the inevitable alternative, whether it is to be an instrument of or an obstacle to the gracious rule of God." 66

b. The relation of the Kingdom and history in the church

There are two significant aspects to this relationship. First, the Kingdom is nurtured and preserved in the church by the sacraments, by deeds of love, by the Word (the reading

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65 OCOR, p. 155.

66 OCOR, p. 239.

and preaching of the Gospel), and by the mere existence of the church as a living international community. Secondly, the Kingdom is spread by the church by the application of these elements to Christians and non Christians. Each of these functions of the church in regard to the Kingdom tends to shade over into the other, but still they represent two distinct phases of the church's duty.

The first aspect of nurturing and preserving the Kingdom is brought out in the following:

> "The church is under obligation never to lose sight of its one supreme calling to bear costing witness, in deed as well as in word, to the higher way of life in Christ.... This is the tragic and continuous tension in which the church is always placed, the tension between the pure ideals of the kingdom and the unredeemed community of men in which it has to live and bear its witness."67

And also in the following:

> "The primary duty of the church to the state is to be the church, namely, to witness for God, to preach his word, to confess the faith before men, to teach both young and old to observe the divine commandments .. These functions of worship, preaching, teaching and ministry the church cannot renounce whether the state consent or not." 68

And finally in this:

> "the church should witness in word, in sacramental life and in action to the reality of the kingdom of God which transcends the

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67 OCOR, pp. 58-59.

68 OCOR, p. 70.

world of nations."[69]

The second aspect of the church's relationship to the Kingdom is to spread it by the application of Christian elements and values to all of society. Of course by nurturing, preserving, and witnessing to the Kingdom as described above, the church will be also in a sense spreading it. But this second aspect emphasizes a more active application of the standards of the Kingdom to the world as a whole.

One way to make this application to society is to increase the possibilities of love in the world and to use all means to check human sinfulness.[70] Another way is to make practical political choices which are governed, at least in attitude, by obedience to God and His purpose.[71] The "Report of the Section on Church, Community and State in Relation to Education" stresses the spread of the Kingdom in still another way when it says that many feel Christian teaching is "essential for the education of citizens of the state and of the Kingdom of God."[72] There are two dangers in this spreading of the Kingdom by the church which must be guarded against. One is to regard the social order as so far from the law of love that the latter cannot be a principle

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69 OCOR, p. 167.

70 OCOR, p. 76.

71 OCOR, p. 155.

72 OCOR, pp.140.

of discrimination but only of general judgment upon everything. "The other error is to identify some particular social system with the will of God or to equate it with the Kingdom of God."[73] The "Report of the Section on the Universal Church and the World of Nations" sums it all up with the words, "the church herself is the leven by which Christ transforms the life of society and nations."[74]

Part 4. The Consummation of these Relationships in the Ultimate Victory of God's Kingdom

In the first part of this section on the Oxford doctrine of the Kingdom we discussed the general area which the Kingdom covered, and we found that the Conference connected it primarily with this world but also to some extent with heaven or eternity or a world beyond. In considering the ultimate victory of God's Kingdom we are faced with even more uncertainty and confusion in finding the central Oxford position.

First of all, it seems clear that there will be an ultimate victory of God's Kingdom in the sense that God's will is to be done and His purpose is to be complete. The Official Report[75] and also the individual writers in The Kingdom of

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[73] OCOR, pp. 78-79.

[74] OCOR, p. 167

[75] OCOR, pp. 52, 76, 71.

God and History[76] agree to this.

Secondly, there is the question of *where* this victory takes place. Here we have a divergence between the *Official Report* and the individual writers. The *Official Report* stresses primarily a victory of God's Kingdom here on earth.[77] but varies in its interpretation of *how* this earthly victory is to come about. The "Report of the Section on the Universal Church and the World of Nations," in speaking of the two main ways that Christians feel war might be ended, is also describing the two most widely divergent methods by which Christians feel that the Kingdom as a whole will come to earth:

> "One view hopes for the elimination of war by the power of God working in history through the religious and moral enlightenment of men and the exercise of their free wills; the other view regards man as so bound in the necessities of a sinful world that war will be eliminated only as a consequence of the return of Christ in glory." 78

Of course, it must be stated that the whole purpose of the Oxford Conference, which was to set up goals, standards, and strategies for the church's approach to world problems, implies a primary acceptance of the *former* of these two methods of ushering in the Kingdom.

Some of the individual writers in *The Kingdom of God*

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[76] *KGH*, pp. 71, 140, 164-65.

[77] *OCOR*, pp. 176, 117, 163.

[78] *OCOR*, p. 163.

and History seem to differ from the Official Report, in their placement of the meaning of history and the victory of God's Kingdom in a new type of world or existence.[79] Dr. Bevan interprets this new world as definitely a heavenly and other wordly existence.[80] Professor Tillich is rather vague in regard to this new world and speaks of "the supra-historical fulfilment of history."[81] Professor Wendland speaks of this new world or existence as definitely at the end of history, and also forming the consummation of history. But at the same time he is careful to make clear that "secular history is no mere means to the creation of God's redeemed community, it is and remains, in spite of sin and death, the development and the life of a divine creation."[82] The reason why these writers seem to differ considerably from the general Oxford position may be partially because they go into more detail than the Official Report. The main reason, however, is that the Conference undoubtedly did hold a strong conviction that the ultimate victory of God's Kingdom would be here on earth, although they probably over-emphasized it a bit, being influenced by the general reason and purpose of the gathering.

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79 KGH, pp. 71, 140, 165.

80 KGH, p. 71.

81 KGH, p. 140.

82 KGH, pp. 165-67.

In concluding this discussion of the ultimate victory of God's Kingdom it would be well to quote the last paragraph of Dr. Dodd's article, because he seems to tie together in Oxford Conference proportions the earthly and the heavenly aspects of the Kingdom and the meaning that lies between them:

> "When we pray 'Thy Kingdom come,' we are not praying that at long last history may end with utopia or the millennium, but that in this situation in which we stand the reign of God may be made manifest after the pattern of its revelation in Christ (through 'the fellowship of his sufferings and the power of his resurrection'). The future, which can bring with it nothing to supersede that revelation of the Kingdom of God, is not our concern, nor is it in the future that we must seek the perfection of which the temporal order is not capable, but in that other world in which the ultimate meaning of history resides, where 'our life is hid with Christ in God.'" 83

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83 KGH, pp. 37-38.

CHAPTER II

The General Implications of This Doctrine in Regard to the Nature and Extent of Legitimate Christian Activity in Social Reconstruction, as Based on the Oxford Conference Conclusions

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The General Implications of This Doctrine in Regard to the Nature and Extent of Legitimate Christian Activity in Social Reconstruction, as Based on the Oxford Conference Conclusions:

SECTION I. HOw These Oxford Principles of Christian Social Activity Were Selected

Five of the following six principles of Christian social activity are taken from the "Introduction" to the Oxford Conference Study Series pamphlet, "The Church and the Economic Order."[1] One other principle, covering the field of corporate and ministerial church action in social reconstruction, was derived from the fourth principle in the "Introduction" and added to round out the series.

It may seem strange that these six principles, which form the axis upon which the whole thesis turns, are derived from the "Introduction" to a pamphlet that contains only one section of the Official Report. The reasons for doing this, however, are well founded. In the first place, these principles are truly basic to the important Section of the Official Report on "The Church and the Economic Order." The "Introduction" to the pamphlet containing this Section says,

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[1] "The Church and the Economic Order", Oxford Conference Study Series, Universal Christian Council, New York, pp. 7-9.

"It would help the reader to keep in mind the following ruling principles which guided the Section in preparing the report and which pervade the logic of the argument."[2] In the second place, these principles have been reworded and redirected so that they now apply not only to the economic order and its problems but to the social order as a whole. Here we are using the term "social order" in the broadest sense so that it will cover all the fields of the Oxford Conference, national and international, political and economic.

SECTION II. The Nature of These Oxford Principles of Christian Social Activity and How They Can be Derived from the Oxford Doctrines of Man and of the Kingdom

Part 1. The Relevance of Christian Faith to the Problems of Social Life

This is probably the easiest of all the Oxford principles to demonstrate upon the basis of Oxford doctrine. First, let us consider the doctrine of Man. In our discussion of the degree in which man still retains the basic imprint of the image of God, we quoted the Official Report as saying that the Christian love of neighbor was an obligation which rested partly upon the native worth and dignity of man.[3]

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[2] Ibid., p. 7.

[3] See p. 8 above.

If man has this worth and dignity to the extent that we have an obligation to love our fellow men, then certainly as Christians we are concerned with the social problems and evils which torture our brothers, Furthermore, since this native worth and dignity is based on a remnant of the image of God then we are even more concerned with social evils because they are a direct offence against God.

Another basis for the Oxford principle of the relevance of Christian faith to the problems of social life is in the Oxford doctrine of man's social salvation. This doctrine has two aspects: that personal faith must, if it is real, result in good works, and that often social problems have to be solved before the Gospel can have a chance to work on men.[4] Now each of these elements in social salvation directly implies the relevance of Christianity to the problems of social life. Christianity is relevant to social life because Christian faith must express itself socially and because the spread of Christianity is often limited by social conditions.

In addition to its doctrine of man, the Oxford doctrine of the Kingdom of God implies the relevance of Christian faith to the problems of social life. First, the general nature of the Kingdom is described as primarily concerned with this world and with God's sovereignty and kingly rule.[5]

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[4] See p. 15 above.

[5] See pp. 17-19 above.

If that is true, then it follows logically that the Christian faith is concerned with overcoming social problems which hinder the establishment of God's sovereignty upon earth. Secondly, the Oxford doctrine of the Kingdom of God includes its relationship to ethics, both individual and social.[6] If Christianity is concerned with any kind of ethics, especially social ethics, then again it is obviously relevant to social problems.

Part 2. The Independence of Christian Faith of Every Specific Program of Social Change

In demonstrating this independence upon the basis of the Oxford Doctrines of Man and of the Kingdom, we shall first consider the positive evidence. In the above section on the general nature of the Kingdom, its characteristic of being in judgment upon all the evil of the world was brought out.[7] Also the transcendence of the Kingdom over the world of nations was mentioned.[8] Each of these qualities emphasizes the independence and separateness of the Christian faith from social programs and changes. Further, in the above discussion of the relation of the Kingdom and history in the

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[6] See pp. 21-25 above.

[7] See p. 20 above.

[8] See p. 21 above.

church, the Official Report was quoted as saying that the church must be the church and "witness in word, in sacramental life and in action to the reality of the Kingdom of God which transcends the world of nations."[9] This implies the independence of the Christian faith. Finally, we can conclude the positive argument with the mention of a danger which was pointed out in the above discussion of the spreading of the Kingdom in society. Here was pointed out the error of identifying some social system with the will of God or equating it with the Kingdom of God.[10] This, too, preserves the independence of Christianity.

From a negative point of view, the independence of the Christian faith from specific programs of social change is a necessity when we consider the fallen nature of man. Man's sin is described above as "not a mere parasitic growth ... but a tragic alienation from God which can be overcome only through a new birth in Christ."[11] If this is the nature of man, then the chance of any specific man-made social program ushering in the Kingdom of God is rather slight, and Christian faith had better not commit its reputation to such an uncertain procedure!

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9 See p. 29 above.

10 See p. 30 above.

11 See p. 7 above.

Part 3. The Function of the Church in Social Life as not Primarily through Official Agencies or Clergy but through Lay Members Who are Engaged in Social Life and Who as Citizens Must Make Political Decisions Which Affect the Social Order

In demonstrating this principle upon the basis of Oxford doctrine from a positive point of view, we must first mention our discussion of individual salvation. Here it was emphasized that even more than social salvation the Conference stressed the importance of individual redemption. The achievement of personal faith was declared primary, one reason being because it provided the motive power to put action programs into effect.[12] Now this implies that the main job of the clergy is not themselves to lead social reform but to foster in their congregations the personal religion and consecration which will impel the laity to make Christian choices in the social and political order.

Another positive basis for this principle is found in the discussion of how the church spreads the Kingdom of God in society. The Official Report was quoted as saying that many feel Christian teaching is "essential for the education of citizens of the state and of the Kingdom of God."[13]

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[12] See p. 13 above.

[13] See p. 30 above.

If that is so, then it must be the job of the clergy to do the teaching and of the laity to put the teaching into the practices of the state and Kingdom. And if the laity are good citizens of the Kingdom, they will make their political decisions such as will usher in a better social order.

Another positive basis for this principle is found in the discussion of the ultimate victory of God's Kingdom. One method of bringing this victory, which puts the task mainly in the hands of the laity, is implied as follows: "One view hopes for the elimination of war by the power of God working in history through the religious and moral enlightenment of men and the exercise of their free wills."[14]

Finally, of course, this principle is necessary for the same negative reason that the previous one was, namely: that because of the fallen nature of man,[15] the church through its official agencies and clergy dare not commit the eternal Christian faith to a specific political or social program. This must be left primarily up to the laity.

Part 4. The Necessity of Church Teaching Going Beyond General Principles but Stopping Short of Prescribing Particular Solutions to Social Problems

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[14] See p. 32 above.

[15] See p. 7 above.

In showing how this all-important Conference principle is based upon Oxford doctrine, we will examine each of the two parts separately. First, the principle says that church teaching must go beyond general principles. By this it is undoubtedly meant that mere general statements about the right of labor to organize and the desirability of a better economic system are not enough. In fact, in the section in the Official Report which deals with "Christian Teaching in Relation to the Economic Order", only one point is for long range goals and standards while two deal with the pointing out of evils, one in the system itself and one in the human heart.[16] But is there a basis in Oxford theology for the pointing out of specific evils by the church? There very definitely is in the following instances: in the above discussion of the relation of the Kingdom to social ethics, the Official Report was referred to as calling for the church to illustrate the Kingdom in its own life in order that it would be in a position to rebuke the state and the world as a whole for social sin;[17] also, in the previous account of the results of man's fallen condition, the general nature of his corporate evil was made clear in terms of pride, egoism, selfishness, and an inordinate will to power, etc.,[18] making it

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16 OCOR, pp. 97-104.

17 See p. 24 above.

18 See p. 11 above.

not too big a step for the church to apply this condemnation of social man to some of the specific evils of man's social institutions; further, in the above description of the duty of the church to nurture and preserve the Kingdom, the Official Report was quoted as saying that "the church should witness in word ... to the reality of the Kingdom of God which transcends the world of nations,"[19] implying that the church is at least theoretically in a position of superior moral insight and also of advantageous impartiality in discussing the social evils of mankind; and finally in the previous consideration of the way to put social salvation into effect, the methods advocated by the Official Report included several which implied the criticism by the church of social evils whenever it saw them.[20]

Secondly, this Oxford principle says that church teaching must stop short of prescribing particular solutions to social problems. We have already demonstrated this point twice before upon the basis of Oxford doctrine, both in our consideration of the independence of Christian faith of specific programs and in our description of the function of the church in social life as being primarily the task of the laity. The demonstration lies, of course, in the sinfulness

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19 See p. 29 above.

20 See p. 17 above.

of man which makes it unwise for the church to commit itself to man made programs,[21] and in the eternal nature of God's Kingdom[22] which should keep it, and the church which is ordained to be its witness, independent of specific social reforms.

Finally, to sum up our demonstration of the bases of both aspects of this fourth Oxford principle of proper Christian social activity, we must mention again the two dangers which the Official Report speaks of in regard to the spreading of the Kingdom by the church. One is to regard the social order as so far from the law of love that the latter cannot be a principle of discrimination but only of general judgment upon everything. "The other error is to identify some particular social system with the will of God or to equate it with the Kingdom of God."[23]

Part 5. The Necessity of Church Action Going Beyond Friendly Relations but Stopping Short of Backing Specific Programs and Solutions to Social Problems

The demonstration of this principle upon the basis of Oxford doctrine is almost exactly the same as the demonstra-

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21 See pp. 7, 11 above.

22 See p. 26 above.

23 See p. 30 above.

tion of principle four and so we will avoid needless repetition. The first phrase, "going beyond friendly relations," is similar to the first phrase in principle four, "going beyond general principles." The second phrase in each is almost exactly the same.

At this point a very important fact must be recognized. Out of these six Oxford principles of proper Christian social activity, numbers four and five deal specifically with the teaching and action of the official church. This, of course, includes the most important part of the individual minister's social teaching and action--all of it that he does in his official capacity as a minister of the church. Now since our whole thesis builds up to a description of the social teaching and action of the individual minister in the industrial field, we might spend a little time defining more closely what type of action is contemplated in these two Oxford principles.

In the discussion of these two principles it has been pointed out that on the one hand the church must go beyond general principles and friendships, and, on the other hand, must not back a specific program of social change. It was also brought out that going beyond general principles meant, in the main, attacking and denouncing those evil institutions and practices which enslave man and obstruct the advancement of God's Kingdom. Here, then, in this rejection of evil, perhaps the most important part of the social work of the

church and the minister lies. This means to a great extent a negative program, a defining of the good by the rejection of the evil. This does not mean that the positive assertion of general policies is not significant, but that the negative approach of going beyond broad platitudes and definitely rejecting heresy is even more essential. Dr. J.H.Oldham in The Church and its Function in Society, one of the books written in connection with the Oxford Conference, defines the principle very well:

> "It may be," he says, "that mainly by this negative path of rejecting certain beliefs and attitudes as irreconcilable with its faith will the church arrive at a clearer understanding of its mission and witness to modern society. If there is no specific Christian program for social action, there are many forms of practice and action plainly incompatible with the Christian insight into the meaning of life. Just as in the early centuries the creeds of the church took their shape largely through the repudiation of particular heresies as incompatible with the Christian faith, so in our time the path to a clearer perception of the obligations of Christians in society may lie through the rejection of certain types of social conduct, social practice or social organization as intolerable for the Christian conscience." 24

Thus, for example, the church might say that prohibition is bad, while it can not say that it is good!

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24 W.A.Visser 'T Hooft and J.H.Oldham, The Church and its Function in Society (Chicago, 1937), p. 213.

Part 6. The Necessity of the Church Putting Its Own House in Order

This was implied in the discussion of the relation of the Kingdom of God to social ethics, where the Official Report was referred to as demanding that the church illustrate in its own life the will of God for the whole of society.[25] The necessity of this relative perfection in the church is again brought out clearly when the relation of the Kingdom and history in the church is presented. Here it was stated that "the Kingdom is nurtured and preserved in the church by the sacraments, by deeds of love, by the Word ...and by the mere existence of the church as a living community."[26] Surely this emphasizes that the church must not only put but also keep its own house in order. Finally, in this same section, the duty of the church to keep itself always in a state of reform is made imperative by words quoted from the Official Report:

> "The church is under obligation never to lose sight of its one supreme calling to bear costing witness, in deed as well as in word, to the higher way of life in Christ." 27

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25 See p. 24 above.

26 See p. 28 above.

27 See p. 29 above.

CHAPTER III

A Demonstration of the Oxford Conference Theology and Resulting Principles of Social Action by Contrast with Illustrative Reference to the Theology and Social Policies of the Roman Catholic, Lutheran and Liberal Christian Positions

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A Demonstration of the Oxford Conference Theology and Resulting Principles of Social Action by Contrast with Illustrative Reference to the Theology and Social Policies of the Roman Catholic, Luthern and Liberal Christian Positions

Up to this point we have set forth the Oxford Conference doctrines of man and of the Kingdom of God and the principles of social action which result from them. Now it is time to demonstrate this theology and these principles in concrete circumstances, and there are two ways to do this. The obvious method is to illustrate by setting forth the message and activity of an individual Christian minister. The other way is negative and involves a description of those theologies and resulting social policies which are in direct contrast to Oxford. We shall use this latter method first, elucidating the Conference position by showing what it is not -- in the Liberal Protestant, Lutheran, and Roman Catholic traditions. In developing these traditions we shall proceed by stating what each author feels about them. Since this chapter is utterly dependant upon these writers for its information, it is felt that the reader's understanding will be increased if he knows in each case just which author is criticising a

certain position.

SECTION I. Optimistic Christian Liberalism

It must be mentioned at the outset that by "optimistic Christian Liberalism" we mean a particular school of liberal theology based on divine immanence and monistic idealism, deriving an all-out social gospel from a faith in the dominant goodness of natural man. This type of liberal theology has become out of date in both Britain and America, but the valuable "liberal spirit, attitude and method of approach" have continued on.[1]

In presenting this now out-moded position we will consider first the testimony of D.R. Davies in his book, On to Orthodoxy, a revealing doctrinal biography in which he relates his long journey from what he calls "Christian Liberalism" to "orthodoxy". The beginning of his career was in a Welsh coal mine at the age of thirteen which he says, "was the finest school in the country for experiencing social injustice".[2] Therefore, when he contacted the social gospel theory as expressed by such men as Adolph Harnack, Shailer Mathews, Francis Peabody, and Walter

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[1] Walter Marshall Horton, Contemporary English Theology (New York, 1936), pp. ix and x.

[2] D.R. Davies, On to Orthodoxy (London, 1940), p. 22.

Rauschenbush, he swallowed it whole, and his first years in the Christian ministry were devoted to trying to convert the church to socialism in order to bring in the Kingdom of God.

"The Great War", says Mr. Davies, "caught Liberal Christianity unawares".[3] It administered the first disintegrating shock to the Liberal Christian conceptions of inevitable progress and the essential goodness of man. Its effect on Davies was not to destroy his liberalism but to shake it sufficiently so that he embraced pacifism. Then after the war the world was stirred by the appeals of President Wilson who stressed that the common peoples of the earth wanted a just peace and that this was to be a war to end wars. But, says Davies, hopes were soon shattered. The treaty of Versailles, the great armaments race and other tragic and contradictory factors combined to convince thinkers that there was something radically wrong with human nature. Other factors contributing to this anti-humanistic conviction were (1) the common policy of deliberate destruction of wealth, both capitalist and consumer, in order to increase profits and (2) the rise of Hitlerism in Germany, the home of Liberalism and Modernism-- a Hitlerism which is the logical and terrible out-

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[3] Ibid., p. 27.

come of Humanism and Liberalism. To back up this assertion about the origins of Hitlerism, Mr. Davies shows that National Socialism in Germany is not merely a phase of social and political development, but is the supreme height of the defication of man. Just one phase of it, its worship of power and the elevation of this sin, which is man's greatest evil, to a position of supreme good, is evidence of its deification of man and his abilities.

Davies' final defence against disillusionment regarding the basic goodness of man was to turn to Marxism. This philosophy claims that all governments are dictatorships except the final working class government which, once it achieves power, will gradually give it up . When the Revolution came in Russia, Marxist predictions seemed to be coming true and Davies turned to it as a last resort for his faith in human nature. Then, says the author, came the fact that finally and forever shattered his belief in the humanistic and Christian Liberal view of the human soul. The working class government in Russia, instead of voluntarily giving up power, strengthened its hold on the state. "There was more freedom under Lenin during the Civil War than there is today, under Stalin. The State grew stronger and stronger".[4] Concerning this Russian failure Davies continues:

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[4] Ibid., p. 60.

> "I realized from all this that radical social change does not mean radical change of human nature. I have been cured of the illusion that Socialism can ever be a religion for a realist. Once I came to see, by the actual concrete facts. how utopian was the Marxist view of man, my Humanism was forever shattered."[5]

Thus we have Davies' view of Christian Liberalism, both as a realistic theology and as a source of social leadership. His criticisms of it are centered in what he calls its false view of human nature. Other counts which Davies holds against Liberalism are its "practical banishment of the other-wordly element in Christian ethic," its "denial of the uniqueness of Christianity," and "its secularization of life and religion."[6]

Another critical analysis of this Liberal Christian position is found in the book, Christians in Society, by Barker and Preston. They divide this general tradition into three subdivisions: the most optimistic section which assumes "that the ordinary, decent Christian will carry on his life like other ordinary, decent mortals;" the section just described above which equates Christianity with a future social system like Socialism; and a third section which they say is critical of the existing order but finds "the basis of Christian life in the immediate guidance of

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[5] Ibid., p. 60.

[6] Ibid., p. 13.

God irrespective of any calculation of consequences."[7] The Oxford group, religious pacifists, and the Society of Friends are given as examples. In attacking pacifists the authors say it is a misinterpretation of the gospel to equate any specific line of conduct with the great acts which God has wroght in history through Jesus Christ. The Gospel was never meant to be a set of ethical standards. Questions of Christian conduct can be decided only by a "calculation of the consequences of different lines of action, and a decision taken prayerfully between them."[8] However, the authors do say that pacifism which is based on a technical judgment regarding the superiority of offensive over defensive weapons etc. is not quite as bad. At least it is not perverting the Gospel. It rests on a technical judgment of the consequences in a particular situation.

The criticism of Dr. W. A. Visser 'T Hooft of this Liberal position is as follows:

> "The desire to be in the closest possible touch with the life of society and of the nation, ... have led to a blurring of the distinction between the church and the world. 'The dividing line between church and society becomes indistinguishable ... As a consequence there has never been a really life-and-death struggle be-

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[7] Edwin Barker and Ronald Preston, Christians in Society (London, 1939), p. 113.

[8] Ibid., p. 115.

CHURCH DIVINITY SCHOOL OF THE PACIFIC LIBRARY

> tween religion and secularism in America.'9 Thus the church has often become so much a part of secular society that it could not effectively challenge it." 10

Thus we have finished our discussion of optimistic Christian Liberalism and its resulting principles of social leadership. Next we turn to the Luthern concept of the relation of the church to society.

SECTION II. Lutheranism

Lutheranism, as far as its doctrine of the relation of the church to the state and society is concerned, might be considered almost the opposite of the tradition just described. From the time when Luther appealed to the Princes in the Peasant's Revolt onward, Lutherans have been somewhat Erastian. The state has had quite a bit of control over the church which has manifested itself in considerable subsidization in Germany. Furthermore, in its theology Lutheranism has always taught that the church is concerned primarily with the salvation of the individual sinful man who can do no good of himself and must humbly by faith accept the salvation wrought by Jesus Christ. Because of this dominant concern with the salvation of individuals and because of a dark view of the general corruption of

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9 Reinhold Niebuhr, Christian Century, Nov. 4, 1936 in 'T Hooft and Oldham, op. cit., p. 69.

10 Loc. cit.

the world and the state, the Lutheran church enters very little into their sphere.

However, despite its passionate conviction of the sin of society and of the hopelessness of trying to improve it as a whole, Lutheranism has tended to look upon the state and organized society as in a sense ordained by God to keep order in the secular realm. Dr. 'T Hooft puts it this way:

> "Lutheran social ethics are based on the doctrine of the divine orders, orders which God has ordained to conserve the world until the last judgment. These orders include the orders of nature, of creation, of family and work, and of government."[11]

Similarly the Augsburg Confession says:

> "The Gospel teaches not an outward, temporal, but an inward, eternal attitude and righteousness of the heart, and does not overthrow wordly authority, civil force and order of marriage, but rather desires that everyone show Christian love and good works according to his own calling and vocation."[12]

These quotations show how Lutheranism looks up to the state to preserve order in the secular world and conceives that world to be the private and inviolable sphere of the state's activity. In fact, as long as the state does not interfere with the strict theological and ecclesiastical sphere of the church, the latter will accept al-

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[11] Ibid., p. 33.

[12] Augsburg Confession in loc. cit..

most any system which the state may set up. A good example of this is the acceptance by most German Lutherans of most of National Socialism. The church opposition in Germany to Hitler came when he invaded the specific field of the church's tradional faith and activity. Barker and Preston offer an even stronger indictment of this position when they say:

> "In practice this type of Protestant regards all human schemes and achievements as so evil that the word of God judges them all indiscriminately. Yet, at the same time he is so conscious that, if left to itself, humanity would relapse into anarchy and destroy itself, that he accepts all the arrangements of social and political life that he finds about him with gratitude, as the safeguard against chaos. This leads to the sheerest kind of reaction. It can only be regarded as theologically erroneous, because it sets too great a gulf between God and His Creation, and at the same time most inconsistently sanctifies the existing social order." 13

Section III. Roman Catholicism

The Roman Catholic theology as it applies to the relations of the church and state claims that if the church is allowed to run the social order everything will be satisfactory. This is a recognition of the sin of the state and secular society but also a belief that in some way the church can overcome this difficulty in a theocratic form of government. The history of Roman Catholic

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13 Barker and Preston, op. cit., p. 112.

contacts with the state belies this faith, for it shows that while the church contains many redeemed men, it is still primarily a congregation of sinners; and even the redeemed, whether they be clerics or not, are still very subject to wordly temptations.

Dr. J.H. Oldham in his description of the Thomistic view of nature and super nature sets forth clearly the underlying doctrine which supports the Roman Catholic program of social leadership. According to this teaching, God created both church and world, and both therefore are fundamentally good. "The world has its place in a firmly fixed and unalterable hierarchy of being whose source and culminating reality are in God."[14] While the world is evil and needs redemption, still there is an ontological continuity between the world and the church and the perfect being of God. God is perfect Being and the world is to some extent evil non-being, but there is nowhere a break between them. From the world to God are "innumerable degrees of reality". This gradual shading of nature into super nature "determines to a large extent the social and political attitudes of the Roman Catholic Church."[15] Built upon this doctrinal basis is the Roman idea that the church must at-

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[14] 'T Hooft and Oldham, op. cit., p. 115.

[15] Loc. cit.

tempt to hold together the otherwordly and this wordly, the super nature and nature. Specifically, this tradition maintains that "While the natural man can recognize the claims of the moral law, owing to his sin and ignorance he must remain uncertain in regard to its content."[16] This requires an authoritarian church to interpret the content of the moral law to natural man. Furthermore, even when natural man hears the content he still can not carry out its teachings without "The restraining influence of a powerful church and the support of the means of grace which it administers."[17] This leads naturally to the theory that the church must dominate and direct the affairs of the state. As Dr. Oldham puts it, "It is the church which must re-establish and maintain the natural order in the world. The Thomist doctrine of natural law seems to lead in the end inevitably to clericalism."[18]

A few quotations from Quadragesimo Anno, the recent encylical letter of Pope Pius XI, will make clear the authoritarian nature of the Roman Catholic position. In speaking of Rerum Novarum, the famous encyclical of Pope Leo XIII, Pius XI says, "it laid down for all mankind un-

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16 Ibid. p. 119.

17 Loc. cit.

18 Loc. cit.

erring rules for the right solution of the difficult problem of human solidarity."[19] And again:

> "The Soverign Pontiff approached the subject in the exercise of his manifest rights, deeply conscious that he was the chief guardian of religion and the chief dispenser of all that closely appertains to it, for the question at issue was one to which no solution could be found apart from the intervention of religion and of the church." 20

In his own right in a section of Quadragesimo Anno entitled, "The Authority of the Church in Social and Economic Spheres" Pius XI says,

> "But before proceeding to discuss these problems We lay down the principle long since clearly established by Leo XIII that it is Our right and Our duty to deal authoritatively with social and economic problems. ... For the deposit of truth entrusted to Us by God, and Our weighty office of propogating, interpreting and urging in season and out of season the entire moral law, demand that both social and economic questions be brought within Our supreme jurisdiction, in so far as they refer to moral issues." 21

What has been the result of this attitude of the Roman Catholics toward the relation of the church and society? It has, of course, caused great efficiency in social action.

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19 Quadragesimo Anno, Pope Pius XI, on "Reconstructing the Social Order (New York), p. 4.

20 Encyclical, Rerum Novarum, Pope Leo XIII (encyclical, "The Condition of Labor," p. 8) in Quadragesimo Anno, p. 5.

21 Quadragesimo Anno, p. 14.

Because of the authority of the priest over his people and the authority of encyclical pronouncements like Rerum Novarum, the local cleric has been able to organize his congregation behind some contemporary issue with a success which has been the envy of many Protestant pastors. Of course in regard to American Roman Catholicism, authority from above has not been of so much value because "they can point to no body of doctrine on church and state that does not have an Old-World flavor and connote an ideal of church control that is repugnant to the majority of Americans."[22] Nevertheless, the authority of the American Roman priest over his congregation on social issues and its efficiency in action has been nearly as great as in other countries.

But has this theory of the relation of the church to the state been all to the good? Is efficiency everything? Barker and Preston bring out two criticisms of the Roman Catholic theory which are very devastating. In the first place, they say, this doctrine tends to absolutize the church as an institution and, worse than that, its material interests. A glance at medieval history and the position of the Roman Church in Spain today makes this very clear. The church tends to identify its material interests with the Will of God, bringing upon itself inevitable corruption and

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[22] F. Ernest Johnson, The Church and Society (Chicago, 1935), p. 127.

secularization.[23] Secondly, say Barker and Preston, the result of this identification of the claims of the church with the reign of God is that all individual prophets within the institution are silenced or cast out. The effect is that the church, which moves slowly anyway, is in danger of becoming dead and reactionary, a tragedy made only too clear by the Spanish situation.[24]

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[23] Barker and Preston, op. cit., pp. 110-111.

[24] Ibid., p. 134.

CHAPTER IV

A Demonstration of the Oxford Conference Principles of Social Action by Illustrative Reference to the Christian Minister in Industrial Reconstruction

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A Demonstration of the Oxford Conference Principles of Social Action by Illustrative Reference to the Christian Minister in Industrial Reconstruction

In the last chapter we attempted to define the Oxford theology and resulting social principles by the negative method of pointing out the contrasting optimistic Christian Liberal, Lutheran, and Roman Catholic positions. Here we made clear the elements of which the Oxford policies do not consist, and the types of concrete action in which they would not result. It is hoped that this has helped the reader to limit the field and to clear his mind of most of that which is inconsistent with the Oxford position. Now we shall turn to a positive exposition of the Conference principles by illustrating them in the work of the Christian minister in industrial reconstruction.

First, however, there is a dilemma which must be faced. The local minister is both an individual Christian and an Official Representative of the church. When will he be acting in one capacity and when in another? The fact that the function of each of these two roles is considerably different was brought out in the third of the already mentioned Oxford general principles.[1] Our answer cannot be very clear-

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[1] See pp. 40-41 above.

cut, but two points will help if they are kept in mind: on the one hand the pastor can endeavor to make plain, in a verbal way, the capacity in which he is acting at the moment, that of an individual or of a church official: on the other hand he always can keep in mind that he will be regarded as a representative of the church by some people all of the time. In spite of this indefiniteness, however, he can be comforted by the fact that most people will regard him, at least vaguely, in his true role: that of a man whose message and activity do not necessarily have the weight of the whole church behind them but which have more authority than the views of layman.

SECTION I. The Minister's Message in Preaching

Here we shall use for our outline a sub-section of the Official Report entitled "Christian Teaching in Relation to the Ecomomic Order", which comes well within the scope of the six general Oxford principles.[2] It is divided into three parts which deal directly with the teaching of the church as a church and therefore with the message of the ministry.[3]

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[2] See chapter II above.

[3] OCOR, pp. 97-108.

Part 1. "Christian Teaching Should Deal with Ends, in the Sense of Long-Range Goals, Standards and Principles in the Light of Which Every Concrete Situation and Every Proposal for Improving it Must be Tested."

Some of the points listed under this heading are the duty and right of every man to work; the right of the laboring man to a living wage, wholesome surroundings, care when disabled from economic activity, and a voice in the decisions which control his welfare; the right of all classes of children to educational opportunities and freedom from extreme handicaps of health and environment; and finally the right of future generations to expect that the resources of the earth shall be conserved.[4]

These examples of long range goals and standards we know are consistent with Oxford general principles because they are from the Official Report itself. Let us seek others from an independent source.

"Social Justice and Economic Reconstruction" is a very recent statement of the "Commission of the Churches for International Friendship and Social Responsibility," a widely representative British interdenominational body. That this document is within the Oxford Conference position can be demonstrated not only by an examination of its positive conclusions, but also by its Introduction which sum-

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[4] OCOR, pp. 99-100

marizes the evils of the present economic system, in a long quotation from the Economic Section of the Official Report.[5] Some of the significant industrial principles in this paper, which both illustrate the form and also give some of the content of the modern preacher's message, are as follows:-

"Charter for the Individual":

> "Every man should be permanently entitled to a position in industry for which he is fitted."
>
> "No man should be dislodged from his place in industry by arbitrary dismissal, but only by orderly process."
>
> "No man should suffer arbitrary reduction in his standard of life or degradation of his standard of work."
>
> "Every man should have an effective share in the determination of the policy of his industry."

"Charter for Industry":

> "Industrial units should be assisted to realise the above standards by the development of appropriate forms of coordinated activity."
>
> "Every useful and efficient industrial unit should be safeguarded from vicious forms of competition."
>
> "Industry as a whole should have means for the orderly transfer of labor from one industry to another."

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[5] Social Justice and Economic Reconstruction, a Statement by the Commission of the Churches for International Friendship and Social Responsibility (British) (New York), p. 7.

> "Each industry should be provided with means of estimating the current real need for its products to help it to determine and maintain fair prices and fair conditions of labour."
>
> "The nation's credit should be used and its financial policy planned with the primary object of enabling industry to fulfill its functions of supplying human needs and directing labour to the greatest advantage of all concerned."[6]

These, however, are only general basic assumptions. How specific can a preacher become in a positive way and still remain within the bounds of this Oxford principle? Social Justice and Economic Reconstruction realizes this need for a graphic picture of the kind of community which will arise when basic assumptions are put into practice.[7] One of its most significant goals of the future is in regard to the management of industry:

> "The direction of industry will become a more equal partnership of the representatives of production, distribution, administration, and capital, together with those of the consumer and community interests--a partnership to which each participant will contribute his special knowledge and ability, and in which no single element can override the rest. Economic compulsion under threat of want will thus be replaced by co-operation in the service of the community without which the average worker's daily job cannot give him any real sense of free partnership in the economic life of the nation."[8]

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[6] Ibid., pp. 16-18.

[7] Ibid., p. 20.

[8] Ibid., p. 24.

Part 2."The Message of Christianity Should Throw a Searchlight on the Actual Facts of the Existing Situation, and in Particular Reveal the Human Consequences of Present Forms of Economic Behavior."

What does this allow the preacher to do in the pulpit? Must he confine himself to the mere listing of examples of social evil, or can he really do something important and analyze controversial issues? Within limits the latter seems permissible, for the following comes close after the above statement:

> "It is not enough to catalogue particular cases of poverty and exploitation or to call attention to specific cases of selfish and irresponsible conduct on the part of those in power. It is the business of the church to point out where economic institutions of our time are in themselves infected with evil."[9]

Surely, if the Conference says that the evil in economic institutions can be pointed out by the official church, that means that controversial issues can be analyzed critically (not advocated) in the pulpit. What, then, are some of these controversial issues? Mueller and Hartshorne, in describing this as one of the ways in which ministers express social and civic consciousness, list a number of controversial topics which various preachers reported they had dealt with, as

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[9] OCOR, p. 103.

follows:

> "Prohibition; City politics and Tammany Hall investigation
> "Socialism; Communism; Fascism; Peace; War debts; League of Nations
> "World Court; Democracy; War; Tariff: Child Labor Law
> "Roosevelt's New Deal and the necessary faith; Professor Macintosh--Citizenship
> "A better economic order with the profit motive eliminated or at least controlled."[10]

But how should one deal with these controversial topics? What would constitute a critical analysis of one of them? Let us take the above mentioned "profit motive" and see what an analysis in accordance with Oxford principles would be like. The Official Report charges this institution with "the enhancement of acquisitiveness" and goes on to say that "it encourages a feverish scramble for money, and a false respect for the victors in the struggle which is as fatal in its moral consequences as any other form of idolatry." It causes "a subtle disintegration" of "the quality of society"[11]

Another critical examination, and summary of the effect, of this "profit motive" institution was made by the "National Study Conference on the Bases of a Just and Durable Peace" held in Delaware, Ohio, March, 1942, and called by many,"the American Malvern." Its analysis, which would be a good guide for "the Oxford preacher," is as follows:

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[10] Frederick F. Mueller and H. Hartshorne, Ethical Dilemmas of Ministers (New York, 1937), p. 43.

[11] OCOR, p. 88.

> "In our era production has been carried on primarily with a view to monetary gain. Profit has been the principle incentive relied upon to turn the wheels of industry and to bring forth the fruits of the soil.
>
> "This system has in recent years developed grave defects. There have occurred mass unemployment, widespread destitution, lack of opportunity for youth and of security for old age. These calamities, which have often been accentuated by short-range, self-seeking trade policies of various nations, have made for war,"[12]

Part 3. "This Searchlight of the Christian Message Can Also Make Clear the Obstacles to Economic Justice in the Human Hearts of People Within the Church."

In this Part, the Oxford sub-section "Christian Teaching in Relation to the Economic Order," goes beyond general goals and specific objective criticisms to a subjective investigation of those factors within the human heart which block a better social order. The Official Report emphasizes that just being individually good is not enough for Christians. They must be shown "how far their attitudes are molded by the position which they hold in the economic order."[13] Further, the Report says that:

> "Christians must come to understand how far ... they are deceived by false slogans and rationalizations, how far they are callous to 'evil at a distance' or to evil exper-

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[12] National Study Conference on the Bases of a Just and Durable Peace, quoted in The Living Church, March 18, 1942, p.8.

[13] OCOR, p. 104.

> iences by another national or class group than their own-- evil to which they may consent, for which they may vote, or by which they may profit. Here, again , the important activity is not to denounce, but to help people to that self-knowledge which comes from the perspective of the Christian emphasis upon sin, so that they condemn themselves."[14]

How do preachers lead their people to this self-knowledge? Let us examine what actually has been done in a homiletic way to overcome the obstacles to economic justice in the human heart. One way has been to give one's congregation examples of the operation of these obstacles in others. Henry C.Potter preached a sermon in New York in 1878 entitled "The Social Indifferentist." His text was from Acts, chapter 18, verse 17, "And Gallio cared for none of those things." He pointed out that many in his time (and we could add, many in our time) were like the Roman pro-consul, Gallio, who allowed the Greeks to beat Sosthenes, a chief ruler of the synagogue, before his very eyes, a perfect example of social injustice which he did absolutely nothing to halt. Gallio, Potter says, was dominated by a culture of passionless indifference which would not allow itself to be touched by the emotions and problems of suffering men. Then he goes on to show that some Christians in his day (and in ours) have developed such a culture. They conceal emotions and feelings and frown upon too

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[14] OCOR, pp. 104-5.

ardent enthusiasm for an unselfish cause. "Tell some one a story of wrong, or want, or human sorrow," he says," and the chances are you will get the answer, 'Really, how very unpleasant. Can you not find something more agreeable to talk about than that?'"[15]

Another of these obstacles to economic justice in the human heart is what Harry Emerson Fosdick calls in the title of a sermon, "The Peril of Privilege." By privilege he means many things: wealth, class, position, up-bringing, a college education; all of these can become perilous inner obstacles to the progress of economic justice. He cleverly gives an example of the operation of one of them in his own life, his privilege of being born into a schoolmaster's family:

> "Do not, I beg of you, suppose that as from afar I am proclaiming this to you. I am saying this most of all to myself ....All my life I have lived in the atmosphere of schools and books. That is a privileged position and because it is I do not know how the worst inequities and wrongs of our present society hurt some people. There are a quarter of a million bedrooms in New York City into which no direct breath of air or ray of sunshine has come since they were built. I never had to sleep in one of those and, what is more, I have never been compelled, no matter how hard I worked, to see my children sleep in them. I do not know what that means.... In New York City are hundreds of thousands of people, honest, self-respecting, industrious, loving their families as I love mine, who, working their hardest at menial and drudgerous tasks, can no more than support their

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[15] Henry C. Potter, Sermons of the City (New York, 1881), pp. 66-71.

> homes on the bare level of a meager subsistence. I have read about that in books, I see the fringes of it with my eyes, but I do not know what it means." 16

But preaches not only lead their people to a self-knowledge of inner obstacles to economic justice by pointing them out in others; they also do effective social evangelization by giving examples of men who have achieved a vital social conscience in spite of privilege and position. Ernest Fremont Tittle does this in a sermon entitled, "The Church and the Glory of God." First he tells of the former Archbishop of Canterbury who "lives in a palace that calls for many servants and sixty thousand dollars a year," and "is separated by a high brick wall from 'one of London's most dismal slums." He quotes the Archbishop as being reported to have said that his position is "'incredible, indefensible, inevitable.'" [17] Then Mr. Tittle tells of another English Cleric, the Bishop of Ely, who has achieved, despite similar position and privilege, even more social consciousness. This divine does not think that his position as occupant of "a huge building, 'whose whole top floor and one wing are closed'" and which "requires for its upkeep sixteen thousand

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16 Harry Emerson Fosdick, Successful Christian Living (New York, 1937), pp. 123-24.

17 George Arthur Buttrick et. al., Preaching in These Times, Lyman Beecher Lectures at the Yale Divinity School (New York, 1940), p. 165.

dollars a year," is at all inevitable.[18] Mr. Tittle quotes him as saying to a recent diocesan conference,

> "The idea that the Church is concerned largely with the upper classes is steadily growing, and I think it is due in part to the fact that we bishops are forced to live in vast houses which are symbols of aloofness. ...We keep too many gardeners to grow too many vegatables to feed too many servants to make too many beds. I should like to see my palace turned into a home for people fallen on evil days at the end of their lives. If they had ten bob($2) a week--or even less--they could come here and live in a nice house with a common room and a pleasant garden to walk in."[19]

Now we have finished our demonstration of the Oxford principles of social action action in the sphere of the minister's message in preaching. Our illustrations have centered around three main points taken from the Official Report itself: the importance of developing long-range goals in the light of which concrete situations and proposals can be tested, the necessity of pointing out the actual facts about the present order, and the value of making clear the obstacles to economic justice in the human heart. Next we must show what type of program the Oxford principles of social action call for in the field of Christian education.

SECTION II. The Minister's Activity and Program in Christian Education

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[18] Ibid., pp. 165-66.

[19] Ibid., p. 166.

Christian education, of course, covers all the activities of the pastor. In preaching, in contacts with labor unions, in calling, in general church assemblies, he has an opportunity to carry on Christian education. However, since some of these fields are taken up in other sections of this chapter, and in order to concentrate the discussion, we will develop the subject, "Christian education", mainly with reference to the church school.

Part 1.The degree to Which Consciousness of Social and Hence Industrial Problems Can be Aroused in Three Main Age Groups[20]

First, there is the group which extends up through the primary department. In this division about as far as you can go is to establish some sense of Christian devotion, and Christian ideals, and an intelligent appreciation of local persons, whom the child knows, in their own setting. By Christian devotion and ideals we mean a sense of reverence for the spiritual, and some concept of right and wrong, unselfishness and selfishness . This will give the child a firm basis upon which to build later a real social concern. An appreciation of local persons such as the milkman, the iceman, and the grocery boy will be the first step in accomplishing this.

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[20] I am endebted to Miss Ilione Baldwin, Director of Religious Education at All Saints Church, Pasadena, California, for these suggestions.

Secondly, there is the period from fourth grade through tenth grade. Here the child's social horizon can be broadened somewhat, but not very far beyond the social problems with which he is familiar in his own community. Some of these would be the poverty of those children at school who are given free lunches, the discrimination against those negroes across the track who are made to feel unwelcome in a "white church", and the unfair labor policy of a nearby factory or union.

Thirdly, there is everyone else from the eleventh grade on through adulthood. In this oldest division it is possible to teach the three principles listed in the above section on "Preaching": general social principles, ends, and goals; the desire for facts regarding contemporary economic and hence industrial problems; and the courage and insight to overcome obstacles to economic justice in the human heart. Three examples of study-subjects corresponding to these principles are whether or not labor should have a voice in the management of industry, the evils of the sweat-shop and the moral and spiritual reasons why Jesus would advocate the obligations rather than the "rights" of private property.

Part 2. Suggestions for a Curriculum which would Achieve These Goals for These Age Groups

First we will present sample lesson materials which are in line with the goals for each of these three age classi-

fications. For the first division, up through the primary, Knowing and Loving Our Neighbors, by Kathrine Smith Adams, Cloister Press, is good.

For the second division, fourth to tenth grades, the following are excellent: Christian Living in Our Community, by Mildred Fish Jaynes, Cloister Press; Riches to Share, by Alice Bartow Hobensack, Abingdon Press; and Exploring Our Neighborhood, by Mildred Eakin, Abingdon Press.

In the third division, eleventh grade and above, these are good choices: My Own Workbook on Practical Christianity, by Alice Brookman, Morehouse-Gorham; Your World and How to Live in It, by Harold Hunting, Abingdon Press; Understanding Religion, by Bernard Liddings Bell, Morehouse-Gorham, consisting of case studies in regard to ethical problems in modern industry; Building the City of God, by Harold Holt, Morehouse-Gorham; Christianity and Our World, by John C. Bennett, one of the Haxen Books on Religion; and The Church and a Christian Society, by Wade Crawford Barclay, Abingdon Press.

Secondly, we come to the matter of teachers who can adequately present these social living and action courses and make them vital. In order to satisfy this requirement, the rector or director of religious education should choose men and women from all walks of life, rich and poor, high and low with no discrimination whatsoever upon the basis of class or rank. The only requirements should be devotion to the task, a willingness to prepare honestly for each lesson, and open-

mindedness based upon the desire to examine all the facts of a problem or situation with equal fairness.[21]

Thirdly, there is the worship service which can be a great stimulus to social thinking and action. Christian Education, Guide I, put out by our National Council, describes several ways in which worship can do this. For one thing, worship is a social act and the mere fact of worshipping together creates strong social bonds. Further, the faith in God and Christ which are developed by worship cut across selfish interests and bind men of diverse backgrounds together. Also, the virtues most necessary in social living such as humility, tolerance and joy in the things of the spirit are generated in true worship. Finally, worship develops two other attitudes which are basic to real social consciousness: a sense of the value of each individual soul as made in the image of God, and a sense of the universal and timeless quality of the church as a great society which covers the whole world and reaches back through the ages.[22] Concrete suggestions for social emphases in worship would thus include an effective rendition of the traditional and customary elements and also such special features as social prayers, hymns,

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[21] I am indebted to Miss Ilione Baldwin for these suggestions also.

[22] Christian Education, Guide I, The National Council of the Protestant Episcopal Church (New York), pp. 13-15.

sermons; special services on labor day and similar holidays; and the attempt to make "white churches" open to all minority groups, negroes, Japanese, and especially all members of the lowest economic classes.

There are still other elements in the curriculum which will assist in developing Christian social consciousness, some of them being as follows: a type of Junior Parish Council where student responsibility and self direction can be fostered; an effort to develop interest in the missionary part of the offering, the types of work to which it goes, and especially that part of it which goes to social service work; local social service projects, and trips both to scenes of economic destitution and rehabilitation; and finally stimulation through surveys and trips of an interest in the conditions of local industries.

SECTION III. The Minister's Activities in the Community, Especially his Relations with Industry

In order to illustrate the Oxford general principles of social action in this section, we shall present the relevant ones again and after each give concrete suggestions for its application and also examples of its successful use.

Part 1. The Function of the Church in Social Life as not Primarily through Official Agencies or Clergy but through Lay Members Who are Engaged in Social Life and Who as Citi-

zens Must Make Political Decisions Which Affect the Social Order.

Dr. James Myers, Industrial Secretary of the Federal Council of the Churches of Christ in America, makes the following recommendations which come under this heading: encouragement by ministers of laboring class church members to join unions and work within them for constructive policies; help by Christian laity in the promotion of social legislation; and "educational trips by church people to labor headquarters, to factories where labor union relations prevail and to consumers' cooperatives."[23]

This function of the laity as being the chief Christian promotional agents for social legislation is recognized by the above mentioned all-important British church conference on "Social Justice and Economic Reconstruction." At the conclusion of its broad general picture of a new and better Britain it says, "We urge Christians who are to be found in every party, to put forward in political circles the proposals we have advocated and to secure that they are commended everywhere to political leaders. Thus the way will be prepared for the kind of legislative action for which we hope."[24]

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[23] James Myers, Do You Know Labor?(Washington, 1940), pp. 122-25

[24] Social Justice and Economic Reconstruction, pp. 30-31.

Therefore the job of the church is to stimulate and inspire; the task of the laity is to carry this inspiration into practice within all types of political and economic institutions. As Dr. A.D. Lindsay puts it, men ought to receive from their religion a "'sense of how high and worthy a vocation politics and social administration may be. To urge men to do such work, to give their very best to it, is the Church's business--to tell them how to do it is not.'"[25]

Part 2. The Necessity of Church Teaching Going Beyond General Principles but Stopping Short of Prescribing Particular Solutions to Social Problems

Dr. Myers stresses two important ways for the minister actively to help industry which would come under this general Oxford policy. The first is the setting forth of general statements and goals in the light of which industrial conditions can be tested. This was discussed in the section on "The Minister's Message in Preaching," but besides sermons there often would be the need for direct public statements in labor crises. At such times it would be wise for the clergyman to remember the encouraging pronouncements of eccumenical bodies such as the following by the Federal

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[25] A.D.Lindsay, Christianity and Economics, p. 139 quoted in Sir Josiah Stamp, Motive and Method in a Christian Order (New York, 1936), pp. 184-85.

Council of the Churches of Christ in America:

> "The Churches should stand for the right of employees and employers alike to organize for collective bargaining and social action; protection of both in the exercise of this right; the obligation of both to work for the public good; encouragement of cooperatives and other organizations among farmers and other groups."[26]

Secondly, Dr. Myers suggests that the church do all it can to assist the worker's education movement. Ministers and church leaders can have a large part in this because of their ability in public speaking and their familiarty with some of the subjects in which laboring people are interested. Not only will the workers benifit, but this contact will be "very valuable as a first step in promoting acquaintance and friendliness between the Church and Labor."[27]

Further, under this same general Oxford principle would come the spiritual ministry of the church to labor. In the words of Dr. Myers:

> "Labor union leaders and members need as much as do other groups the spiritual ministry of religion for the development of individual character, courage, honesty,, unselfishness, tolerance, fairness, faith, comfort....Personal religion can help to eliminate pride and selfishness and to promote internal peace in unions as in other groups."[28]

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26 Social Ideals of the Churches, The Federal Council of the Churches of Christ in America (New York, 1934), p. 18.

27 Myers, op. cit., p. 123.

28 Ibid., p. 125.

These suggestions of Dr. Myers for constructive public statements, for aid in worker education, and for a spiritual ministry to labor do not exhaust the possible activities which fall under Part 2, "The Necessity of Church Teaching Going beyond General Principles but stopping Short of Particular Solutions." For example, it was said above that in labor crises there would be a need for direct public statements by the clergy. These were described as positive and standard-setting; they might also be critical and denunciatory and carry with them the prophetic fervor of "Thus saith the Lord!" A good illustration of this occurred at the time of the agitation to abolish the twelve hour day in the steel industry. A commission of Inquiry was appointed by the Interchurch World Movement to investigate the situation and issue a report. Trained investigators with the assistance of the Bureau of Industrial Relations, New York, made a thorough survey and published their findings in a three hundred page report.

> "Briefly, it found the strike justified by the ...long hours, low pay, and lack of labor representation. It held the United States Steel Corporation responsible as the dominant factor in the industry. It criticised the labor unions also... It recommended the abolition of the twelve-hour day and the seven-day week, the establishment of adequate means of conference between the workers and the management, the appointment of a government commission to inaugurate such conferences and to 'continue and make nation-wide and exhaustive this inquiry into the basic conditions in the

industry.'"[29]

Now it might be thought at first glance that this commission went too far and actually entered the forbidden Oxford realm of prescribing particular solutions for economic problems. But actually the commission was merely pointing out a social evil in an existing economic institution. The churches did not go out and campaign for an eight hour day bill; they denounced the existing twelve hour day. And further, at the end of the above quotation it will be noticed that the commission left the future more detailed inquiry up to the government. Finally, the change to the eight hour day and six day week came about through no legislation but by the pressure of public opinion upon the steel industry. This is an excellent example of the teaching task of the church outside of the pulpit and church school. In a labor crisis like this one it must criticise, analyze and inspire public opinion without committing itself to a specific formula.

Another good illustration of this duty of the church to point out evil but not recommended specific solutions is to be found in the Malvern Conference statement about the private ownership of the great resources of the community. After enumerating the evils of this ownership and how it holds back the development of a more God-centered society,

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[29] James Myers, Religion Lends a Hand (New York, 1929) pp. 98-100.

the conference says,

> "The time has come therefore for Christians to proclaim the need for seeking some form of society in which this stumbling block will be removed. Those of us who support this resolution pledge ourselves to do so." 30

Is this the endorsement of a specific program? Of course not! It is merely the pilloring of a particular evil and the demand (in the form of a general goal) for "some" type of society where it will be abolished.

What then would be an example of public statements and teachings which go beyond the Oxford position? Sir Josiah Stamp in his Motive and Method in a Christian Order quotes a minister who wrote to his local paper as follows:

> "It is because Social Credit offers the fullest antidote to war, and on the other hand furnishes the most satisfactory instrument of social justice, that as a minister of the word of Christ I cannot but enter my protest against your correspondent's light dismissal of the subject."31

An even worse example of public identification of Christianity with an economic program is given by the same author. "A very earnest correspondent" asked him to back a pamphlet advocating social credit, part of which read,

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30 The Malvern Declaration, by members of the Church of England assembled in conference at Malvern from January 7th to 10th, 1941, reprinted by The Witness, Chicago, Illinois.

31 Sir Josiah Stamp, Motive and Method in a Christian Order (New York, 1936), p. 172.

> "Now, gentlemen, I ask you to ally the principles for which Christ lived and died to a political movement. Let us be able to say a vote for us means a vote for God ... If you adopt this policy... you can take Christ down from the cross where he has hung for 2,000 years and make him your Prime Minister, the Kingdom of Heaven your country, and your common purpose that understanding and common relationship in the living man your God."32

These last two illustrations are certainly contrary to the Oxford position. They are perfect heresy in the light of all for which it stood! But now we must turn from the consideration of public statements and workers' education to the more direct action of the church in regard to industrial problems.

Part 3. The Necessity of Church Action Going Beyond Friendly Relations but Stopping Short of Backing Specific Programs and Solutions to Social Problems

In the first place, although this principle says that the church must go beyond friendly relations, still these basic contacts are essential. Dr. Myers lists the following ways to achieve them:

> "The appointment of fraternal delegates to central labor unions by ministers' associations and councils of churches;...the observance of Labor Sunday;...contacts with the unemployed; open forums; labor and employer speakers in churches."33

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32 Ibid., pp. 170-171.

33 Myers, Do You Know Labor? pp. 122-123.

He describes the technique for an individual clergyman as follows:

> "It is not difficult for a sympathetic minister or church member to acquire labor contacts. All that is usually needed is for him to call on the secretary or president at union headquarters and get acquainted with the simple introductory statement that he is a friend of labor,... and would be glad to be of any possible service." (along the lines which Dr. Myers has already suggested)34

The second emphasis in this general Conference principle is to go beyond friendly relations, and to do something concrete to help industrial problems without being committed to a specific program. President William Green of the American Federation of Labor suggests something which fits in here exactly. He claims that in industrial disputes, when public opinion is very important, a general discussion of the question is necessary to a satisfactory conclusion. This means, of course, that the right information must be available, and he goes on to say that,

> "In this connection the church could render a service, not only to labor but to industry and society, by providing unbiased agencies for joint educational discussion. This service does not necessitate partizan or definitive action on specific issues by the church, for that would be distinctly outside its province. But the church can with propriety be the champion of free discussion and fair play. Of transcendent influence would be the ethical standards and emphases on right living which

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34 Loc. cit.

> the church would focus upon any concrete situation."[35]

This call for an impartial search for the facts by the church would imply that, in addition to assisting in the collection of accurate information, the church and so the individual clergyman should be ready and willing to act as mediator or advisor in local industrial disputes if so called upon. Dr. Joseph Fletcher, Dean of the Graduate School of Applied Religion, Cincinnati, Ohio, has done this successfully, and Dean Eric Bloy of St. Paul's Episcopal Cathedral in Los Angeles has just been called to the same task. According to the Los Angeles Churchman the latter "has been appointed on the national panel of arbitration between Government, industry, and labor. This appointment was made by Lucius R. Eastman, chairman of the American Arbitration Association."[36]

Thus we have shown that the church can go beyond friendly relations and be concrete in its industrial relations by helping to find the facts in disputes and by being willing to mediate them. Can it go any further and still not back a specific positive program? Messers Miller and Fletcher in The Church and Industry suggest a procedure which is on the border line of Oxford permissibility but which we feel

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[35] William Green, "What Can the Church do for Labor?" in Business and the Church, a symposium edited by Jerome Davis (New York, 1926), p. 75.

[36] The Los Angeles Churchman, March, 1942.

manages to remain "orthodox." That is the practice of taking sides in an industrial dispute to the extent of turning over a parish house to the use of a union strike relief committee.[37] Another example of this in a more permanent form is Labor Temple on the corner of Fourteenth Street and Second Avenue in New York. Labor Temple is a specialized labor church established in 1910, by Charles Stelzle, at that time Secretary of the Department of Church and Labor of the National Board of Home Missions of the Presbyterian Church. It is a meeting place which aims to interpret the church and labor to each other, and it includes such activities as head quarters for relief committees during strikes, open forums, a workers' school, a regular meeting place of twelve labor unions and, finally, regular Sunday services and church school. Labor Temple is run by a joint committee composed half of Prebyterians and half from the Temple's constituency. Ultimately, however, the control rests with the Church Extension Committee of the New York Presbytery. Two thirds of the budget of Labor Temple is raised by the New York Presbytery, and "in this way," says Mr. Myers, "all the Presbyterian churches in New York are obliged to face every year the issues which are involved in maintaining this outpost in the labor world."[38]

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[37] Spencer Miller Jr. and Joseph F. Fletcher, The Church and Industry (New York, 1930), p. 176.

[38] Myers, Religion Lends a Hand, pp. 118-27.

Now if Labor Temple is still within the Oxford position, if it does not involve church commitment to specific programs and solutions, what would be an example that does? We need an illustration of what is "wrong" from the Oxford point of view in order to have a clear concept of what the conference feels is "right". In his Religion Lends a Hand Dr. James Myers tells of a college student pastor who arranged a public meeting at which a nationally known mine leader spoke in favor of the strikers in a local dispute. In connection with this same strike Dr. Myers says that "The Workers' Education class led by Ludwig...shifted over from the field of education into the field of union propoganda....It was outspokenly partisan, and Ludwig, being identified with the class as its leader, came naturally to be regarded as partisan also."[39] Now this would seem to be out of line with Oxford teaching. In the examples given above of Labor Temple and of the use of a parish hall by a strikers' relief committee, there was no direct backing by the official church of a specific union demand. Labor Temple serves as a spiritual, educational and functional headquarters for many unions irrespective of whether they are on strike or not. The policy is merely for the church to have a real ministry to labor. In the other instance of the use of a parish hall by a strikers' relief committee,

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[39] Ibid. pp. 56-57.

the church is feeding the hungry and clothing the naked, as it were, but is not committing itself to any particular union demand. In the case of Ludwig, the student pastor, however, we have an example of a minister definitely going over the line by backing one side in a local labor dispute. He arranges a public meeting which becomes partisan; a class of which he is the teacher spreads union propoganda. This is committing the church to a specific program,and it is going too far, from the Oxford point of view.

SECTION IV.The Minister's Recommendations in General Church Assemblies and Conventions

Finally we come to what the individual Christian Minister will recommend in the general assemblies of his church in regard to the field of industrial relations. Samples of the type of proposals which he would make have been mentioned or implied in previous discussions, aspecially in "Section II"on the minister's message in preaching. Therefore we will not examine them in detail again but will enumerate briefly the general Oxford classifications into which they would fall.

First, the convention delegate would recommend the adoption of goals and principles in the light of which all concrete problems and proposed reforms could be tested.[40] Second-

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[40] OCOR, p. 98.

ly, he would ask for condemnation by the assembly of evils in the social system and obstacles to their reform within the human heart.[41] Thirdly, he will suggest that the church develop new machinery for research into the facts of industrial disputes and for action in regard to them.[42] Lastly, he will demand that the churches, individually and as a whole, reform their own institutional life.[43]

In concluding this section we must point out two dangers which the convention delegate should do all within his power to forestall. One is the unfortunate situation of a church assembly trying to formulate goals for industry without the advice and counsel of men with a union point of view. This nearly happened at the Delaware Conference on a "Just and Durable Peace", for during the consideration of the report of the economic section one of the delegates asked if anyone present was a member of a union. As The Living Church reports it, "After a brief silence, at least one delegate identified himself as a member of a trade union."[44] In order to produce a truly representative Christian report in the economic sphere there certainly should have been more members of the conference with a union background.

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41 OCOR, pp. 102-104

42 OCOR, pp. 109-10.

43 OCOR, p. 108.

44 The Living Church, op. cit., March 18, 1942, p. 8.

Another danger is that of issuing pronouncements which are so far beyond the will of the church as a whole that they amount to nothing more than pious platitudes. The Commission on Social Service of the 1919 Detroit General Convention of the Episcopal Church reported unfavorably to the Convention concerning a memorial presented by the Diocese of Los Angeles "asking that a canon be written into the Constitutions and Canons demanding of every member of the Episcopal Church the full assumption of responsibility in the cause of social justice."[45] The Commission felt that no blanket action like this would bring about the desired end, and that therefore "'Such justice must be promoted by a fearless and consecrated Church membership, rather than by general enactment.'"[46]

Thus we have come to the end of our task! We have presented synthesized Oxford Conference doctrines of Man and of the Kingdom of God. We have selected six broad principles as representing the mind of the Conference on the relation of the church and society, We have demonstrated how these principles are definitely implied in these doctrines. And, finally, we have illustrated the Oxford principles negatively by comparison with optimistic Christian Liberalism, Lutheranism, and Roman Catholicism, and positively by

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[45] Miller and Fletcher, op. cit., pp. 124-125.

[46] Ibid. p. 125.

suggestions for Christian ministers in the field of industrial reconstruction.

All this analysis and application which we have attempted is necessary and important. Indeed, each individual pastor should try to discover how the most significant and ecumenical council of modern times applies to his own ministry. But our approach must be more than intellectual. If Christ's Kingdom is to go forward in the face of all the evils of the present social order we shall need, above all, faith and real consecration. Let us keep ever before us the courageous closing words of "The Message from the Oxford Conference to the Christian Churches" of the world:

> "We have tried during these days at Oxford to look without illusion at the chaos and disintegration of the world, the injustices of the social order and the menace and horror of war. ...We are troubled, yet we do not despair. Our hope is anchored in the living God....In his name we set our hands as the servants of God, and in him of one another, to the task of proclaiming God's message of redemption, of living as his children and of combating injustice, cruelty and hate. The Church can be of good cheer; it hears its Lord saying, 'I have overcome the world.'"[47]

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[47] OCOR, pp. 51-52.

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